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THE SECRET FIRE

In the dusk of old houses in the twilight,
Where years pass soft-fingered as the shadows
Over the oaken floors,
And there is no-one living left remembers
The hand that carved the lintels of those doors,
In that place of sleepy memories you will find it,
A fire in the coign of dreams;
A fire in the hearth that cannot bind it;
New flame, where the old flame gleams.
By riverain and waterways you'll meet it;
And hard by the loneliness of seas;
Where little creeklets trickle under ti-tree,
It is there—but not because of these;
In lovely lands, where summer is a kindness;
Where in long-storied meadows sweet with flowers
Scars of old battle-grounds are healed;
And in this un-historied country,
This stern, brown, inland land of ours,
Whose past is lost in lost unwritten aeons;
Grown old with the burden of her noons,
Her hostile winds, and cold prophetic moons.
(Pale skeletons of destined nullity.)
But when at night the constellations' tracing
Spells in star-patterning her secret runes,
And weaves the dark with bright mysterious lacing,
To gem with diadem this Cinderella,
More splendid than their splendour shines and glows,
Without desire, the fire beyond their fire.
What deep, primordial sanction still bestows
The secret flame's impartiality?
Out of the driftwood of years, of the centuries' windrow
Gleaned to the flame that's a light on hands and on faces,
Lighting the lips and the eyes of the chosen; filling all places
With the ineluctable dancing shadow of beauty.

MARY LISLE.

EDITORIAL

DESPITE increasing difficulties, it has been possible to complete the year's issues of *Southerly*, thanks to the generosity of subscribers and the willing labours of our literary contributors. As the work of our Association goes on, indeed, it is easy to over-estimate the difficulty, admittedly great, of producing this magazine; as, for that matter, it is possible to take too gloomy a view of one's ability to attend the lectures and other functions arranged by the Committee. This remark is prompted, not by an attempt to minimize our problems or the enthusiasm and industry that have gone to overcome them, but by an opportunity that has been given us to study the work of a Branch less happily placed than our own. I refer to the receipt of a pleasant and neighbourly gift from the Secretary of the United Provinces Branch of the English Association in India—a copy of *Essays and Studies* (1938) by members of the U.P. Branch.

The book abundantly illustrates the difficulties, indeed the trials, that are inevitable in the teaching and learning of the English language and the study of its literature in India. Some of these have their causes in history; Professor Amarantha Jha, the President of the Branch, writes:

When the Universities were founded, English became immediately the favoured subject of study, primarily as providing the surest means of official preferment, but partly also as the language which enabled one to make the acquaintance of writers like Godwin, Burke, and Mill—whose political philosophy, immediately after the Rising of 1857 and the growth of a feeling of nationalism, suited the temper of young India and directed the aims and ambitions of the leaders of the Indian Renaissance. . . . There was also, in many quarters, a genuine literary enthusiasm for the tongue that Shakespeare spake. . . . Much of the literature of modern Bengali, Marathi, Gujrati, Hindi, Urdu is indebted both in spirit and in form to English. But, owing to the exigencies of administrative convenience, thousands of Indians have had to study English and waste priceless years in striving to attain a working knowledge of this exceedingly difficult language. . . . The attempt to impose a foreign language and compel every boy and girl to attach at school and college a superstitious importance to it is responsible for the antagonism towards it that is so marked a feature of Indian political and educational thought today.

By all accounts, this antagonism to the study of English has since 1938, to say the least, not decreased. Professor S. G.

Dunn enlarges upon the ideas contained in Prof. Jha's paragraph, and answers two of the chief objections to the teaching of English in India. To the claim that the imposition of English on Indian education is designed to denationalize and enslave Indian thought he objects that no national movement in India could succeed without the use of English as a common means of communication and without the political theories culled from the English writers named above. Prof. Dunn as a teacher of English was himself called, only half jestingly, "a teacher of sedition" by members of the administrative services. To the claim that English is stifling native literature, he replies that in Bengal, which outside Madras has assimilated more English than any other province, the vernacular is more alive, more prolific in literature than any other.

The political opposition from Indians is, however, a serious problem to English teachers; so also is the opposition to reform in teaching methods from official and vested educational interests. Again, Mr. Deb, the donor of the book, paints a dark picture of the problems to be faced by the U.P. Branch, with a small membership scattered about in five or six towns. It is with a regretful smile one reads his reference to our Branch in its palmy days with 500 members, but it is with unqualified admiration that one reads of the determination and enthusiasm with which the U.P. Branch has been carried on through riots, strikes and picketings, through student indifference and hostile criticism. If the number of meetings there is not quite so great as here, there is ample reason. Several writers in the volume mention yet another difficulty—the establishment of values in criticism which can be comprehensibly applied to the literature of both East and West; judging from the work of the U.P. Branch as represented here, Indian scholars are making a distinguished enough contribution to English studies to suggest that sound principles have already been found. The opinions given of Milton, de la Mare, Crabbe, D. H. Lawrence and particularly of Kipling, are most stimulating.

The gift from our friends in India should do much to inspire us by the example of their industry and enthusiasm, and it suggests a way by which our own work can be widened in scope and interest.

W.M.

FIRST JOB

By MARJORIE ROBERTSON

It had been an advertisement, just an advertisement in the daily paper and she had answered it. Her mother had said "The best thing you can do, my girl, is to get yourself a job . . . moping round the house all day, no use to me or anyone else, as far as I can see. . . ." And her father had looked vague when he had been told at dinner "The best thing Else can do is to get herself a job, that's what I said to her to-day. The best thing you can do, my girl, I said, is to get yourself a job . . . moping round the house all day. . . . Don't you agree, father?"

She had called him "father", secretly and shyly, before Else was born. "Good-bye, father" she would whisper to him in the mornings when he was leaving to go to work, with a world of meaning in the "father", and he would kiss her fondly and go down the street with his shoulders squared ready to face the world, ready and eager to wrest a living from it for his own family. Which is perhaps what was intended. Perhaps even a woman lacking altogether the feminine subtleties has sufficient cunning to make sure provision for the future of the race. But down the years, the "father", that shy and secret joke between them, had worn itself into a thin, deep groove of habit, and now there was no humour in it, no deference, no urgent need of protection to make her subtle.

Else sat there between the two of them, and her father looked at her with a transient unhappiness stirring in his heart. An unfamiliar feeling this. Usually he went about quietly with an air of silently stealing through the world, not wanting to give trouble to anyone, not wanting anyone to be put out by his being on earth. He escaped notice and he escaped deep feeling in that way. He seemed to have said to emotion "I'm not worth troubling about . . . don't you worry about me . . . I'll just hang about". And emotion had long ago decided that he was not worth powder and shot.

Now he looked at Else, at the dark fine hair, long and silky, hanging low on her neck, at the dark line of lashes hiding the dark eyes, at the fine sallow skin flushing slightly

as her mother talked. He could remember her as a tiny thing, dressing up, playing the fine lady calling on him. She would come knocking at the front door, dressed in a ridiculous old coat that her mother had worn on her honeymoon, shaped well in at the waist and flaring out in exaggerated billows round her thin thighs. Else would stand there solemnly, tilting up her head at him to peer with grave dignity from under the brim of a huge hat with a bedraggled feather curling round the crown. He would invite her to come in and they would sit stiffly in the best room and talk about the weather and his wife's health and his little girl. Then she would get up and, swaying across the room to him, she would shake hands and go as gravely as she had come.

Was she happy now, he wondered? What was she thinking about, now, this moment? He didn't, he realised, know her very well. And peering short-sightedly at his wife, he wondered what she was thinking. He didn't, he thought with a sense of shock, know her very well, either. Grown-up people didn't know each other very well, he decided, and he trembled for a moment on the brink of sentiment. He nearly tried to get to know them both, to gather them to him, to love and protect and understand them. That shy, defenceless look on Else's face, that unlined, unmoulded softness that looked as though it would bruise so easily, stirred his imagination. He only had to take that softness between finger and thumb, he felt, and it would mark. He should do something about it. He knew he should do something.

With gratitude he heard his wife's voice start again and he was able to stop thinking. "I said to her, when I was your age, I was earning . . . sixteen shillings a week, too, which was a lot for a young girl in those days. You just get the paper in the mornings, my girl, I said, and we'll see what's doing."

In bed that night, just as he was sinking deeper and deeper into the softness of the mattress with the feeling of being absorbed into a huge nothingness creeping through him, his wife's voice floated, reassuringly familiar, over and above the nothingness, helping him to slide unobtrusively into sleep. "I said to her, now you take care of yourself, my girl, now that

you're going out into the world. There's not to be any carryings-on, mind you. Men will take advantage of you, if you give them any encouragement, my girl. Men, I said, are like that. You keep yourself to yourself, my girl, and see that you're treated with proper respect. No one, Henry, even though I do say so, no one can say I haven't done my best for that girl. Even you, Henry", she said, building him up in her mind into a critical carping monster of a man, "even you, Henry, must admit. . . ." And then Henry was completely absorbed into nothingness and became one with its silence.

"Now this", said her mother the next morning, placing her finger firmly over a tiny advertisement down near the end of the long column, "now this sounds the very thing". The advertisement read "Young girl, artistic, learn retouching, small salary to begin", and the address of a photographer.

"Now that's just the very thing for you, Else. Why, when I was a young girl, I was always considered the artistic one of the family . . . real talented, if only I'd had the opportunity . . . why, the lovely flowers and things. . . ."

"What", said Else, in a firm small voice, "what is retouching?" And she looked up into her mother's face to find that it had become completely expressionless like a pond that a sudden wind rising and dying has smoothed to blankness. Then life and expression came back to it. "That's just what you're going to be taught, my girl. You can't expect to know these things without learning them. Now off you go . . . and remember, Mr. Sayley will give you a reference. A reference from a clergyman is always such a help, I do think. I was speaking to him yesterday and I told him what I'd said to you, 'Now the thing for you to do, my girl, is to get a job. . . .'"

Else gazed at herself in the blurred mirror in the tiny front hall, straightened her hat, and swallowed an uncomfortable feeling in her throat as though a tiny fish bone had lodged there . . . but they hadn't had fish for breakfast, not for weeks had they had fish. Then she picked up her handbag and the paper and went slowly, slowly to the train.

They were long, dim, musty stairs leading up to Floor 3, Room 27, Brook's Building. Stairs with indefinable grime

ground and packed into the cracks and smeared along the once cream walls. Stairs that seemed intolerably weary of being stairs, of being used, day in day out, by men going about their strange occupations, getting excited, getting angry, tramping, shouting, stealing along, whispering unspeakable things in husky voices, threatening, blustering, being smooth and suave and persuasive. Else found her knees trembling long before she stepped on to the landing of Floor 3 and stood on the little square of brown, orange-mottled carpet that seemed to have settled just outside the door of Room 27 a long while ago.

The door was half open, so she took a deeper breath and knocked, and waited. Interminable ages dragged slowly past, her life going with them, until she was standing there watching herself being slowly carried away on a thick oily stream, with no power to rescue herself. Then a thick voice that seemed almost like the voice of the stream said "Come in . . . go on, come in", and she took another deep breath and went in.

She sat down opposite him at the huge desk littered with tumbling piles of photographs, hundreds of photographs of cricket teams, and smiling small girls, and tragic looking big girls, and queer shaped vases with single roses rearing belligerent heads over the indignity that held them captive.

He asked her questions in abrupt gruff spurts of talk, and sat silent in between these efforts. She would answer the questions, and then wait and watch his large dark hands with the black hairs curling stiffly on their backs, watch his hands playing with a tube of paste, jabbing at some green blotting paper with a sharp little knife. He would look up and remember another question, and the question would come jabbing at her, and he would eye her with heavy dark eyes and then look judicially down his great thick nose while he waited moodily for her answer. "You might do . . . yes, I think you might do. . . ." He became abstracted again and started squeezing the tube of paste. Out of the longest silence, he said, "Look here", and with sudden energy, he thrust in front of her a large photograph, brown and cream, of a marble pool with a fountain in the middle and trees growing thickly round the far edge. "Look here, you take this now, take it to the

table over there, there near the window . . . and fill in the white spots, carefully, like this . . . fill them in with this. . . . I'll be back, I'll be back in, say, oh, say fifteen minutes. . . . I'll come back then, and we'll see." And he was gone.

She heard his feet go thud thudding down the stairs, heard them for a long while until the thuds were small, protesting echoes, muffled, and then silent.

She made idle dabs at the hundreds of white spots for a few minutes. Then she gazed out of the window and then around the room. She stood up and crept stealthily over to a door, stood listening, then breathlessly pushed it open. The room in there was all white walls and cameras and black cloths thrown over throne-like chairs. It was very lonely, very cold and very still. The whole place, she felt, as she carefully shut the door, was lonely, and so quiet that she could hear her breath skipping away from her.

She went back to making idle dabs at the white spots for a few more minutes, hundreds and thousands of little white spots spoiling the beautiful smooth brownness of the photograph. Her eyes fluttered away from the spots to another door and again she crept over the worn grey carpet and opened the door. She hadn't expected anything, hadn't thought of what the room might be or where the door might lead. But this dim drab room with its stretcher bed with the grey blankets pulled carelessly over the crumpled sheets, the still dented and crumpled pillow, the old brown chair with the day's paper tossed across it and a pair of braces lying limply over the back, the battered chest of drawers with brushes and cigarettes and collars and ties and a little pair of scissors in an untidy jumble among the dust . . . this she just stood and looked at, and then she shut the door and went quietly back to the window and the white spots.

It had frightened her, that room, so unexpected, so out of place, so masculine. She thought again of the large, strong hands with the coarse skin and dark hairs, of the dark eyes in the dark-skinned face with its great heavy nose, and she saw that dark face against the crumpled pillow with the drab grey blankets close under the chin.

Steps came thud thudding up the stairs, heavy steps. She stood up and was half-way across the room to meet him as he came in. "I don't think I would suit, thank you", she said with a set, stubborn little dignity in the whole of her sallow small face, and the dark line of her lashes smudged her cheeks with shadow as she looked down and away from him. "I don't think I would like it. . . . I don't think I would like the work at all." And she slipped past him and out the door and away down the long dim stairs, her feet just skimming them like two seagulls skimming the waves as they swooped downwards in their flight.

The three of them sat at dinner that night, caught together, held together for the moment, by the pale yellow light, and her mother's voice came dropping into the yellow light like small stones dropping into a pool and disturbing its serenity.

"There's no need to be down-hearted, no need to sulk, just because you've been turned down once, just because you don't suit. There's just as good fish in the sea. . . . Why, when I was a girl it took more than one setback to worry me. So to-morrow morning, I said to her, we'll get the paper again and see what's doing. I think", and she eyed Else with a ruminative look, the look of a man who has been persuaded to buy a horse, "I think a dressmaker's the thing, just to start with she could help and learn the trade. I think that's just about the thing. When I was a young girl I always was good with my fingers. . . . 'Give that girl a piece of muslin', Mum used to say, 'give her a piece of muslin and a ribbon, and it's a wonder what she can do with them . . . a model!'"

Else flashed one naked glance at her mother's face and then the dark lashes shadowed the cheeks, and Henry, peeping at her face, felt vaguely unhappy about her again. What was she thinking now, this moment? He didn't know her very well. But he didn't feel again the impulse to get to know her. Watching her, he was faintly puzzled by a difference. That defenceless easily bruised youngness had altered, and a stubborn, guarded look moulded the lines of the face into firmness. No, he thought, he didn't know her well, not very well; but then, grown-up people didn't know each other well.

THE PLAY

Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit.

At once the great bouquet of darkness falls,
A moment lifts the blindfold from our eyes,
The sweet scent of excitement fills the gloom,
The curtain lifts impatiently and yet too soon
Joining the creation and the void.

The play is of behaviour; it begins
Upon a climax, and there is an arch
Through which the players pass
Back to the unreality and forth to life.
Only the possible occurs, except at times
When a profound compulsion strikes the pit
Who then like Romans in the circus
Will cry for tragedy or a whim of mercy.
The progress may depend on chance or force,
But all the actors are at stake.
Thus sheer diplomacy refines, endangers,
And nothing happens just the same or twice.
Always they wait for news of the outside,
A messenger, a distant shot, a laugh.

The verse treads deftly with the gods,
Rudely with fools and servants and the poor,
It threatens with the chorus, they are too strong,
Trembles in the soliloquy,
In love is formal and in murder brief,
In comedy extensive, full of puns,
Flat in advice, sententious in suspicion,
Charming in song, sad in the epilogue.

The play within a play distracts the eye,
Needless perspective too far tempting skill:
The law of drama lies in the just distance
Subject to object, audience to stage.
This etiquette sustained we see as through a form,
As painting lies on cloth, sonnets on sheets,
Music distributed through woods and fingers.

Nor is the actor any instrument
But the unwilling sibyl of events
In whom the cause concealed, he must forecast
To his best knowledge how to point resistance,
Alleviate and beautify the end.

The play is of the players and transpires
 Half in the public view. No act not forced
 From privacy by its very nature meets
 The terrible requisites of the dramatist.

Those generations fail the art that live
 In daily consciousness of roles and cues
 And side with melancholy Jacques.
 The poet that sucks at opium impairs
 Any exactness of the situation;
 To drain the soul of more than it creates
 Is his foredoomed experience;
 His face contorted in true suffering
 Seems to us false; we turn from him.

KARL SHAPIRO,

June 8, 1943, New Guinea.

BABEL

On the plain of Shinar they rested, all the world,
 A handful and yet all, their present terror
 Wavering, wanting to evaporate.
 They walked and yet they knew they walked
 The ocean floor;
 But forward and still forward in the heat
 The thirst of boldness drew them,
 While overhead the rainbow, marvellous
 And immaterial deity, spanned the sky.

They said, "Because the deluge covered us,
 Let us not be deceived of heaven and earth,
 But fashion out of bricks a mighty wall,
 A mighty gate and a mighty city,
 And raise a tower;
 And ever the rains can overwhelm the hills
 And the rivers mount the sea,
 We and our flocks shall enter and rejoice.
 Here is safety." And on that day they built.

How lofty and shining is the onefold tower,
 The shaft of aspiration, their right hand,
 Smooth as the flesh of princes, strong as the sword,
 And it resists the storm and flood,
 And the anger of God.
 How skilful are the masons and the slaves
 That nest like ants in secret;
 Winter and harvest they shall live together
 And worship at the column, their salvation.

Till he descends upon the monolith
And scattering the topmost with his hand,
As he entering the highest synagogue
Would one day sweep aside the gold
And stand alone;
Bewilders every tongue. Each to the other
Chattering in his panic
Rushes in loss of knowledge here and there,
Seeking the voice of those he understands.

They are already nations; some to the east,
Some to the west, father divorced from son,
Regroup and arm against the languages,
For God by man will not be threatened
For good or evil.
And elsewhere and forever on the earth
The righteous reasoners
Secure in present freedom are confounded,
Their towers struck, their safety overthrown.

KARL SHAPIRO,
July 31/43,
SWPA.

"FIGHTER PILOTS"

Among the timeless solitudes of space
Like brave explorers of a brave new world
We learn to live and sometimes learn to die,
Earth's warriors who see God face to face
Tracing our peaceful patterns on the sky
Or deep in furious combat tossed and hurled,
From day to day taking a nameless place
And bidding the ancient way of things "good-bye".
No gift has life so fine as this to give,
The ecstasy, the burning of the blood
When aerodrome, then earth to leeward slips,
And heading for the sun, one hour we live
Above the world, the masses and the mud—
With careless laughter tumbling from our lips!

K. COLLOPY.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892—)

By PAM. BROAD

MISS MILLAY "chisels the loveliest lines of poetry carved in America". She is the vivid singer of the passing moment, and her naïveté, directness, and spontaneity place her songs of transient moods in the category of timeless literature.

Two features of her poetry which justify its claim to excellence are a simple epigrammatic neatness and inevitability, and an incantatory control of rhythm, especially in the traditional sonnet form.

She derives subject matter from her native scenes and neighbours, utilising the harsh exciting present "to displace the isles of Greece and Helen's tiresome classic lineaments".

All her early life was spent in Rockland, Maine, beside "The sticky, salty sweetness of the strong wind and shattered spray". Her first long poem, entitled "Renascence", an expression of adolescent mystical ecstasy, was an adventure, but it sounds almost allegorical because of the way it interpreted and distilled the temper which, after a long drought, was coming into American verse. This poem won for her nationwide fame and admiration, and was the outstanding feature of an anthology entitled *The Lyric Year* (1912). "Renascence" was translated into Spanish and appeared in Pan-American papers. Miss Millay is the only American poet besides Poe to be translated into Spanish.

After graduation in 1917 she ambitiously removed to New York and settled in Greenwich Village. Here, on the floor of an unswept and disorderly room, she recalled the coast of Maine—"the green piles groaning under the windy wooden piers", "robins in the stubble", and "brown sheep upon the warm green hill". . . . But her poignant poems were rejected by magazine editors "already overstocked with poetry" and, to support herself, she published short stories over the pseudonym "Nancy Boyd". Llewelyn Powys wrote of her at the time: "She was dainty with a daintiness that can only be compared with the daintiness of Queen Anne's lace. . . . I came to appreciate the rash quality of her nature, heedless

and lovely. . . . She might disguise herself in all the pretty frippery that she might buy at Wanamaker's, she might be photographed for *Vanity Fair* every day of the week, and yet below her laces and ribbons there will always remain a bare-foot poet, doomed yet redeemed, under the shadow of Eternity". Four years after their first meeting he wrote: "She possessed the same fragile appearance, the same brittle, shell-like, pearl-like appearance that had always set me marvelling. And her lovely leprechaun eyes, yellow-green in color, had the same strange light in them that I had observed at first, like the light of baffled mistrust in the eyes of an infinitely desirable mermaid who finds a crowd of alien creatures looking down at her. . . ."

She published three plays in 1921 when she joined the Provincetown Players in the capacity of playwright and actress. Alfred Kreymborg recalls that she used to appear at rehearsals, "when she appeared at all, an hour or two in arrears", but that her complete "understanding of the pantomimic demands of the part" compensated for her irregularity.

In 1923 she married and removed to a farm in the Berkshires where she has spent much of her time since, making occasional pilgrimages to New York City and Italy. She lectures frequently and is well-known as a reader of her own work. "She talks clearly, with marked precision and poise."

Miss Millay is not to be classed among the "makers" who have disrupted language by their experiments for new forms and sensibilities. Of her own day of modernism in intellect, she has yet been nearest another age technically. The sonnet was ideally suited to her requirements and she surrendered herself to the iambic line and all the machinery of the form. She took the principle of surprise common to the final lines and developed it into a clever note of drama. She brought to the sonnet the interest and ferment of conversation. She introduced commonplace details and sometimes the grandeur of folk heroism—like the women of Matinicus, "lifted in an unforeseen and local metaphor clean out of time and into pathos". In the sonnet sequence *Fatal Interview* (her most significant volume, which appeared in 1931) she demonstrates a mastery of the classic form. The title is, significantly, a

phrase from the English poet John Donne, whose complicating influence on English and American poetry was everywhere being felt at the time.

Olympian gods, mark now my bedside lamp
 Blown out; and be advised too late that he
 Whom you call sire is stolen into the camp
 Of warring Earth, and lies abed with me.
 Call out your golden hordes, the harm is done:
 Enraptured in his great embrace I lie;
 Shake heaven with spears, but I shall bear a son
 Branded with godhead, heel and brow and thigh.
 Whom think not to bedazzle or confound
 With meteoric splendours or display
 Of blackened moons or suns or the big sound
 Of sudden thunder on a silent day;
 Pain and compassion shall he know, being mine—
 Confusion never, that is half divine.

After the War and during the early 'twenties, she expressed particularly for women and for youth, a spirit that was symptomatic of its generation. She voiced a new freedom, a new equality—the right of woman to be as inconstant in love as man, and as changeable. It was a timely postulation of intellectual and biological equality—an aspect of feminism for the first time portrayed in poetry of audacity, lyrical quality and popularity. It is interesting to note that many of her more intense poems written at a later period are in celebration of the opposite practice—that of romantic love, or what is more crudely (or exactly) called transference.

What distinguishes Miss Millay's love-poems from others written in English by women is the full pulse which beats through them. Rarely since Sappho has a woman written as outspokenly as this:

What lips my lips have kissed and where, and why,
 I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
 Under my head till morning; but the rain
 Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
 Upon the glass and listen for reply;
 And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
 For unremembered lads that not again
 Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

In such passages Miss Millay has lent body and vesture to the demand by women that they be permitted to enter the world of adventure and experiment in love hitherto inhabited by men.

A tincture of diablerie occurs repeatedly in Miss Millay's verse, perhaps most of all in the candour with which she speaks of love. She has abandoned the disguise in which other women poets, apparently afraid for the reputation of their sex, have spoken as if they were men. She has ignored the posture of fidelity which women in poetry have been expected to assume. She speaks incisively with the voice of women who, like men, are thrilled by the beauty of their lovers and are stung by desire.

The simplicity of her language parallels Housman's liking for monosyllables, nor should her filiation with the Shropshire lyricist be gainsaid, notwithstanding her wider range and emphatically romantic approach. It is the custom of poets to berate death, and both Housman and Miss Millay have heaped up a cairn of polished lyrics for the doomed. If the sense of injustice is more present to the elder poet, Miss Millay's was aroused by current events, nor are her poems on justice denied in Massachusetts among her best work. *The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems* (1927) contains poetry of the familiar lyric strain, and a section entitled "Justice in Massachusetts" which was, in effect, a requiem for civilization, inspired by her distress over the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in Boston for a crime which many persons believed they had not committed. In August, 1927, she paraded in Boston against the death-sentence passed on these simple-minded Italian dreamers who regarded America as a brotherhood dominated by love.

Miss Millay's poetry, like Housman's, has found favour with a wide public because it is "behind the times". One has but to contrast it with that of such audacious contemporaries as Pound, Eliot, Hart Crane, to recognise how old-fashioned is her method of attack, and how far she is from the pressure of contemporary thought. Her modernity lies only in her willingness to permit the commonplaces of daily living and dying to intrude upon her verse, and in her acknowledgment that the relation between the sexes is not as it was portrayed by the poets of romantic love. It has been often repeated that she should have lived and sung in Sappho's Lesbos or John Donne's England. Associated with no poetical school, she is, however, associated with the new poetry as is no other American. To

this eminence she has undoubtedly been helped by the simplicity of her craftsmanship. Adoration of beauty, the force which motivates her best creation, is timeless. As a lyricist she delights in the symbols of beauty found in nature—but the highest beauty is ideal, of the mind and the mind only. "She says in her most famous sonnet":

Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

The private drama of passion and the crisis of personal attachment, in her early and middle poems, have been displaced in later poetry expressing social passions and tragic desperation for the race. In 1931 she told an interviewer that her next book would be called *Epitaph for the Race of Man*, the title of which sprang from her cognizance of the "horrible and cruel things men do to each other".

APOSTROPHE TO MAN

(on reflecting that the world is ready to go to war again)

Detestable race, continue to expunge yourself, die out.
Breed faster, crowd, encroach, sing hymns, build bombing air-planes;
Make speeches, unveil statues, issue bonds, parade;
Convert again into explosives the bewildered ammonia and the
distracted cellulose;
Convert again into putrescent matter drawing flies
The hopeful bodies of the young; exhort,
Pray, pull long faces, be earnest, be all but overcome, be photographed;
Confer, perfect your formulæ, commercialize
Bacteria harmful to human tissue,
Put death on the market;
Breed, crowd, encroach, expand, expunge yourself, die out,
Homo called sapiens.

Miss Millay is not of the first order of poets. She is a distinguished example of the second order, without which literature could not bear the weight of Dante and Shakespeare, and without which poetry would lose its average sensibility and become too specialized. Being this kind of poet, Miss Millay was not prepared to clear up the point of view of her generation: her poetry does not define the break with the nineteenth century. This task was left to the school of Eliot "who penetrated to the fundamental structure of the nineteenth-

century mind and showed its break-down". Taking the vocabulary of nineteenth-century poetry as pure as you will find it in Christina Rossetti, and drawing upon the stock of conversational imagery accumulated from Drayton to Housman, she has created, out of shop-worn materials, an interesting personal attitude: she has utilised the language of the preceding generation to convey an emotion peculiar to her own.

"At its height, her poetry reflects the paradox of its being: it is immediate and it is immutable." There will always be readers who go to Miss Millay, a poet of love, for the vicarious enjoyment of emotion as well as the indelible loveliness of such lines as

Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave,
Mortal Endymion, darling of the Moon!

It is her intensely personal poems rather than the products of her more disciplined art and thought that have won for her as large an audience as any American contemporary poet.

"THE JEWS REQUIRE A SIGN, BUT THE GREEKS SEEK AFTER WISDOM"

They clamoured for a sign
Of old, in Palestine.
The seeding grasses scattered at their feet
Drifts of eternity.
A butterfly
Hung at a flower's throat
And in the storm-racked sky
All power went by.
Nightly a hill
Feigned conquest of the undefeated sun.
And still
They asked a sign!

They sought for wisdom
Where the sunlight shone
On grey-green hills;
And built the Parthenon!

MARY LISLE.

SOUTHERLY

ICHABOD

We were the unarmed race,
Naked the land we trod;
Now we are Ichabod,
Held in a harsh embrace
That evermore invokes
The burden of two yokes.

One is the yoke race-deep
Within our hearts, that yearn
For what is lost, and mourn
What memory would keep
Sacred and undefiled,
As though it were a child.

One is the pressure by
The hard, relentless hand
Laid heavy on the land
Once ours in tribal tie.
Through this the tribes have wept
Justice that fell—or slept.

In the old years when earth
Was ours in commonage,
We took but hunter's wage,
And there was none knew dearth;
Freedom to all we gave,
And none with us was slave.

When death came hounding us,
The world that saw us pass
Heard no loud cry, *Alas!*
Where none adventurous
Might stand, stricken, denied,
Beneath the stroke we died.

Pity we do not ask.
Yet may God's Judgment stand,
And, with an even hand
Advancing to its task,
Bid the great balance fall
Equal on one and all.

Not ours a conquered past.
In all the world, alone,
One flesh was ours, one bone;
Through our closed women's caste
No alien ruler's blood
Mingled its impious flood.

Nor knew we savage creeds;
We worshipped as the high
Gods ordered from the sky;
Our offerings were deeds.
Now are we compound-penned,
And all our ways condemned.

Still, in the far-off deeps
Of forest where the white
Man dare not come, the might
Of racial passion keeps
The ancient law. There roam
The tribes. The dead come home.

But here, hunted and shamed,
Torn and bespattered by
Pursuing hate, the lie
About us the acclaimed
As truth, what hope have we,
Save death, to set us free?

Yet of your mercy—if
That mercy be no more
Than some small dendroglyph
Set for us on the shore
Where once we were the proud—
Yield, to this dust, a shroud.

MARY GILMORE.

HENRI III OF FRANCE

Conducted to the Shades

— 1589 —

by Jacques Clement

Monk and Villager of Sorbonne

By HUGH McCRAE

Writer's excuse:

Though based on historical statement, this narrative is sometimes inventive; i.e., possible probabilities infiltrate certified truths; as they do in records of the present era, under our eyes.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to compare the weft of 1589 with the warp of 1943; imagining—vainly of course—Schickelgruber, dead; beside Bellona, another stinking corpse.

* *

A contemporary brochure gives an account of one, Jacques Clement, a dominican from Sorbonne, visited by an angel, bigger than mortal man, swinging a sword and repeating many times "You must kill the king!"

Not everybody believed this; and, indeed, some said a priest had played upon Jacques's simplicity; instructing him at night. Be that as it may be, the boy heightened his imagination by feeding upon prayers only—even without sauce—until he grew gaunt like a wolf.

Would run up and down.

Would show his teeth to the moon.

Yet Jacques was honest; and, since he looked upon himself as an instrument of God, it would be unjust to consider him criminal.

In July, 1589, he set out for Paris; and, having arrived there, was lodged, against his will, in a secret house, by order of Guesler, attorney-general. Guesler, who had been warned against the dominican, paid spies to watch him during the night . . .

They saw Jacques, asleep; and, on his lap, a breviary pressed open at the story of Judith and Holophernes.

Voltaire, in his "La Henriade", has set a bait for Jacques through example of this Old Testament heroine; but *minus* originality, because he copied the pattern of League partisans who chose legends from Holy Writ, likely to inflame a potential regicide.

* *

Something pertinent appears in a Jacobin book printed at Troyes (*chez M. Maurois*) soon after Henri III's death.

In effect, this is how it reads:

One night, God sent to Jacques Clement, in bed, an angel who showed a sword, using these words: "Awake, little father, and take

into thy hand this weapon I have brought; inasmuch as it is written that thou shalt slay the French tyrant, winning freedom for the innocent. For thyself, garlands everlasting."

Having spoken thus, the angel increased his brightness until the room seemed full of fire; so that Jacques became blind for three hours; at the end of which time, his vision being restored, he found himself alone.

Towards daybreak he heard the guard change; saw shadows of doves career about the floor, where light, let in through a crevice, revealed the morning fine and warm.

Meanwhile, soup on a stove, from the keeper's lodge, sent wafts perhaps less unpleasant than the prison air.

Without appetite, Jacques remained rapt; like a spirit, disembodied; unconscious of the world.

He knew not what to do.

At last, a priest (and friend) came to him; whereupon our dominican told everything, asking quickly whether God might let him kill so wicked a king . . . one who hated his people, terrorising them, even to turning men out of their houses; and admitting soldiers to their wives.

Next to the Devil, a barbarian unworthy to live.

The priest replied: "It remains true that Our Father in Heaven particularly forbids attempts upon human life; yet, in the case of a renegade king, so cruel and godless, we should remember the fate of Nebuchadnezzar's general at the hand of Judith of Bethulia—and *believe* she was directed of God."

*

*

The king's worst enemies were certain citizens of Paris who went under the title of The Six; not that six was the number of their membership, because, actually, it exceeded forty, but on account of the half-dozen wards of the city they had decided to represent.

The leader of this band, born simple Le Clerc, called himself grandiloquently de Bussy. A tough soldier and stout-hearted demagogue; this man promoted a clique, in common with others from Mayenne, in hope of upsetting Henri from the throne.

Also, in addition to The Six, priests galore, from as many pulpits, groaned for the blood of the king, promising the regicide immediate entrance into heaven. Jehu and Judith, names of assassins, not only tolerated, but countenanced by Jehovah, were bandied about for every one to hear.

Henri fled from Paris, and sent to Navarre asking for the help which he, in similar circumstances, had formerly refused that prince.

Navarre, empty of malice, dispatched large bodies of troops to Blois; while he, himself, riding hard, entered the city a day and a half before they came.

Soon, both Highnesses, at the head of combined armies, set out against the capital.

The League trembled . . . seemed to be lost . . . when a monk of the order of St. Dominique, twenty-four years of age, did that which the pulpiteers had so often asked for, in vain.

Jacques Clement, austere religious, almost melancholy-mad, crackled into spiritual flame under the touch of fiery tongues everywhere about him.

At last, he confided to his father-confessor a resolution he had formed of becoming liberator of the League.

Was blessed, joyfully.

Even canonised in advance.

Wherefore, Jacques now readied himself for the adventure, praying and fasting by day and by night. Repented his sins. Took sacrament.

Bought a knife.

*

*

One morning he appeared in a crowded antechamber at the king's house in St. Cloud; and, with simplicity, asked to be admitted to the presence, giving as a reason his knowledge of a plot which he must reveal *instantly*; otherwise harm might be done.

An officer of high standing sent the young man in charge of a servant directly to the king, who received him in silence. Alone.

Jacques showed a face, pale as the letter he brought which he feigned to have been written by First President Achille de Harlay.

Henri found the writing difficult. Raised the parchment almost to cover his eyes. . . . Exactly what Jacques had hoped for. . . .

Very prettily, he knocked his blade into the king's belly; and, being of a generous nature, forgot to take it back.

Then he stood up; hands across his breast; gaze lifted towards heaven: ready for whatever fate Providence had in store.

Henri (the knife still in him) thrashed the air as near to Clement as he could: then—exhausted—slid along the floor.

Only minutes later Taquin, a page-boy, walked inside the room. Saw his master, dead. . . .

"Hi—Hi!"

"Hi—Hied!" again; causing courtiers to run in and kill Jacques, who fell with revengeful force upon the body of the king.

In this, they did wrong, since it behoved them to take him alive; so that he might be racked into betraying names of accomplices; besides street-numbers of houses where they had met.

Now, because they had shut Jacques' mouth too readily, these men grew suspect of being implicated themselves.

Rome applauded the crime; while most Parisians, however refreshed by Henri's death, lamented that of Clement, speaking of him long afterwards with adoration and tears:

SOME GAVE THEM WHITE BREAD AND SOME GAVE THEM BROWN . . .*

"Experience of the War neuroses shows that any emotion, especially if accompanied by psychic conflict *as in the struggle between fear and duty*, may be the efficient cause of dreams. Jung, if we understand him aright, regards the dream as an attempt (usually by way of analogy) at adaptation to present or future demands or difficulties, while it has been suggested that *one function of the dream is to make some of life's problems clearer to the dreamer.*"

"It will usually be found that with uncivilised man, the magico-religious side of everything is uppermost . . . *and simply because the observer is not accustomed to recognize similar experiences in himself*, he may easily fail to notice it."—*Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, The Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1929. (Italicised to suit this argument.)

DREAMS that prove significant to the dreamer—voices in the night—even visions. Not a few of us have known some of these experiences, especially the first mentioned—and most have dismissed them at once as suspect and not on any account to be recalled, save perhaps in the psycho-analyst's confessional.

But the Aboriginal knows no such repression. From these dreams of his, these visions, these voices in the night, he makes his songs, his dances and the myths that thread his oratorio and grand opera, and form the basis of his sacred Books, not yet graven in stone, but none the less enduring for that—rather enduring as the grass endures, that knew the weight of Adam, as today it bends to, and recovers from, the solidest welt of the solidest shoe in Christendom. For, strange to say, when we examine aboriginal song and myth, CURIOUSLY enough (i.e. with the CARE exhibited by the CUR with nose glued long and lovingly to the scent) these same so primitive efforts prove one in intent, as also in essential content, with our own insistently recurring radicals of behaviour and culture as revived and refurbished in the song and allied arts of each succeeding generation. For all our culture, all our language, all our symbology, for all our seeming sophistication, are necessarily based in the magico-religious. And this, for all the efforts of the semanticists who, in stripping language to the bone, but reveal an indestructible skeleton, beside which the laws of the Medes and the Persians are but as tissue paper, save where adhering to this same mineral core. For it is old news that the cross of the Christian and the factory-chimney of the Realist are but sublimations of the primal Phallos, pruned and fretted, circumcised

* This article has been unavoidably held over since April.—Editors.

and subincised, towards goals, both spiritual and economic, temporarily divorced, but ultimately reconcilable we cannot doubt, because the fruit and symbols of one essential reality, the prime fixation of the Life-Urge to Self-Regeneration through Trial and Error.

To our more immediate purpose, M. Géza Róheim's psycho-analysis of some Australian dreams (*The Riddle of the Sphinx*) reveals that the Amazon, the Midday-demon and even the Sphinx, itself, are but variants of an especial dream-myth symbology, known to Australians, as to all other peoples, the world over, and so known because of a demonstrably universal psychologic currency, common to the human mind in all conditions of culture. Indeed, we may even say that Freud's "discovery" is but a refurbishing, and clarification to suit modern needs, of matter known to all peoples, or to some of their number and after some fashion, at all stages of human experience. The chief difference between Freud and his predecessors is that, while psycho-analysis seeks to abolish repressions, the world's initiation and mystery schools have ever sought to exploit them in the interests of abnormal psychic experience.

And what has ever been the mechanism for this exploitation, if not an artificial enhancement of that same *struggle between fear and duty*, cited above as an "efficient cause of dreams"? Are not the elaborate tabus imposed by all man-making societies designed for this one end—not merely to subordinate Fear to Duty, but also to provide spiritual endorsement of the supreme necessity for this subordination, by inducing in the candidate, through imposed austerities, predisposition to the dreaming of significant dreams, dreams which may possibly *make some of life's problems clearer to the dreamer*? Again, what are modern War neuroses but the fruit of austerities and psychic conflict imposed on certain members by a society which no longer makes these gestures with its eyes open, or partially open, but which is forced into retrograde barbarities through that so elaborate form of fixation or self-hypnotism which we call our Industrial Civilisation, that machine-engendered Machine which, at the moment, would seem to have assumed control of the very destiny of its "inventors"?

This article is not to be either ethnological or political. Its object would be purely literary, were it not for the disconcerting fact that nothing is *purely* anything any more. The curious cur may no longer solely rely on assiduous tracking. He must also turn to digging, if the quarry is to be unearthed in contemporary venery.

What then have we in mind? Just this. JINDYWOROBAC has been much discussed of late, and deservedly. It certainly seems reasonable that Australia should develop a peculiar literary school based on, or at least steeped in, aboriginal symbology. At the same time, we must remember, the modern world is rightly impatient of any purely national culture, for the very reason we have just mentioned—simply nothing can be *purely* anything in our contemporary complication—

and the hands of the clock can no more be set back than the sun can be induced to travel widdershins. Indeed, we can say, with one eye on the bomber's moon, that the same age-old struggle between fear and duty is playing an intensified part in the speeding up of our dawning realization, paradoxical as it may seem, of the essential unity of mankind. And this holds true not merely for us, but for our opponents. Perhaps it may be news to some of us that the Nazis have taken a leaf from the very book adopted by Jindyworobak (in their own Nazi way, of course). Nevertheless hear E. A. Mowrer in *Germany Puts the Clock Back*: ". . . all recruits were, for instance, given an almost jesuitical training in self-control. To a group of them . . . a non-commissioned instructor would relate a funny story or an enormity. They must listen with immobile faces. If one laughed he was ordered to climb upon his wardrobe and from this perch without a smile to bawl out an old hymn, 'From the high Heaven descending'. Another who smiled was sent under his bed, whence he must chant . . . 'From the depth of my need I cry to thee'. In other words, these prospective officers were trained to carry out the (apparently) most ridiculous, incongruous or terrifying orders, face the most ludicrous, provoking or alarming situations without a trace of visible emotion. The theory was that he who can control his laughter can control his fear."

And what has this to do with Jindyworobak? Just this. It is modern German anthropology which has suggested this revival of primitive initiation tests. And whence their data? This laughter test is practised by several Australian tribes, also in New Guinea, and apparently again connects with the Polynesian myth of Maui's laughing fantail (the waggishness or infirmity of purpose in his nature) causing him to lose the secret of immortality.

Well, wouldn't it . . . ? Exactly! At least, it should help us to realise that even some "practical" benefits might accrue from Jindyworobak. Hear the Anthropological Institute once more: "Magico-religious observances normally enable the performers to carry out with confidence their most vital tasks and to maintain mental stability under circumstances which otherwise would demoralize them by despair, anxiety, fear or hatred." Are we sure that we can afford to "laugh it off" quite so heartily? Of course, we know no one is given quite so much to laughing at trifles as the aboriginal Australian. But how about matters that are not trifles?

And, having eventually arrived at a realisation of the oneness of Man, how long before the next step may be taken, the final renunciation of individuality, the renunciation of the very concept of individuality as false and untenable? The primitive can be of immense help to us here, for the very essence of success in his magico-religious operations is the realisation (vague, and even unconsciously entertained, though it may be) that individuality is an illusion. We are

not individuals, but divers facets of one organism whose field of operation is the biosphere of this planet, and whose name is Life, a sort of polyp colony with superficially discrete and independently moving cells, cells engaging in mutually destructive, and even cannibal activities, but fundamentally not individual, rather so many experience-gaining organs of the one universal Experiencer or Candidate for Regeneration through Psychic Conflict and the Struggle between Fear and Duty—a conscious struggle so far as mankind is concerned, the brain, as it were, of the Organism, a brain in which so many warring ideals are simultaneously housed that it would seem to belong to a madman, were it not for the fact that, ever and repeatedly, this one supreme Ideal of Self-Regeneration through the subordination of Fear to Duty manages to express itself in the works of the practical (even where the notions of Duty clash) and in the dreams of the dreamer. So that Self-Redemption may be definitely posited as the permanent and key fixation of the universally immanent Anima, known ordinarily as Life. Paradoxically, it has been the very attempt of primitive man to exploit this subconsciously realized fact by his consciously entertained fiction of an individuality which has set, and kept, and still keeps, the ball of cultural evolution on the roll down the Magico-Religious groove.

If Jindyworobak is to induce us to revert in some part to the primitive Australian, it is these facts which it must grasp before it can possibly take up the task of reproducing the aboriginal at the desired level—namely, that of contemporary white Australia.

But have we no poets who have already effected this translation? Strictly, all poetry must necessarily reproduce the primitive, since, dealing primarily with the emotions, it instinctively expresses them in that age-old dream symbology which remains the basis of song, no matter how subtle its presentation.

But have we no poets whose special business it has been to unearth this great tap-root for exposition in more or less naked form? We have. Throughout our literature there have been many, not the least of them Blake and Francis Thompson. And today we have the Surrealists who have carried the gesture one stage further towards the primitive, seeking to express not even naked emotion, but solely naked sensations, and effecting the same inevitably, through reversion, whether instinctive or deliberate, to the age-old fixed symbols, the universality of which comparative mythology has of late thrust with such stimulative effect under any inquisitive (and at the same time CURIOUS, and let us never forget its literal meaning) nose.

Though we have no space for them here, the Surrealists are another set of primitives, artificial though they be, from whom Jindyworobak might learn something of value, as Surrealism has not neglected to learn from its many, many predecessors, from the primitive myth-maker to Blake and Thompson and Lewis Carroll. Let us

take some verses of Blake to illustrate this claim. They were selected by Mr. Hugh Sykes Davies for his essay, *Surrealism at This Time and Place*, which was reprinted in Mr. Herbert Read's *Surrealism* (Faber and Faber, 1936):

And if the babe is born a boy,
He's given to a woman old,
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold. . . .¹

Now, let us perform mytho-analysis upon this so opportune example of the naked primitive in modern literature. In many Australian tribes there is a gesture of giving the boys to a horde of Amazon women from whom the candidates are immediately rescued by the initiates, whereafter the women are banished. It would be as well for the interested to study Róheim on the significance of the Amazon in psycho-analysis. It is usual too in Australia for a young man's first wife to be much older than himself. This too may have some bearing on the hereditary attitude of mind which has produced the Amazon symbol and has caused it to reproduce itself in the Australian's dreams. All the above is to be considered in connection with the Duty and Fear conflict, fear of the elders who will punish any immature attempt to exchange the ancient amazon for a tender nymph. And the fruit of said conflict? Regeneration dreams, couched in the symbology peculiar to the dreamer's cult and increasing in significance with the psychic and mental development of the dreamer as both nature and art consort to perfect his initiation. Arrived at maturity, he may even encounter the Ganymede and Promethean symbols, being snatched aloft by his Hermetic Eaglehawk to be carried off to the Land of Magic, inhabited solely by porcupine quills (i.e. by beings whose sole patent of contactibility through the human senses is the tingling of excitement they arouse), there to have his entrails rent out and bright crystals (the opened chakras of eastern mysticism?) or super-active whirligigs or tadpoles (chakras again?) substituted, thereafter to awake a New Man, magically empowered to transmute the ogress (but no longer a physical ogress) into the Virgin (but now a divine, no longer a human) Mate. This supreme experience of course is reserved for that rare type, the potential medicine-man. Nevertheless, the warrior type may also seek and find totemic—which is to say, daimonic—aid, the main desideratum of all neighbour-harassed peoples.

Mr. Sykes Davies finds in the above verses indications of "the extent of melancholia and preoccupation with the strange pleasures of pain . . . everything that was called 'le mal du siècle'. . . . Blake gives to the algolagnic sensibility its purest and perhaps its most beautiful expression."

¹ "The Mental Traveller", *Poetical Works*, edited by Sampson, page 162, lines 9-24.

This particular preoccupation may nor not have been especially prominent in the century above cited. Nevertheless, when we examine these verses, we find in every line a true appreciation of the eternal validity of dream-symbols to express the supreme experience of Regeneration. Not a new symbol in the whole extract. Everything paralleled time and again in mythology.

Line 2, old woman, Earth Hag as Tester, Ceridwen whose testing transmuted *Gwyon Bach* (Little John, John the Forerunner) into the radiant-browed *Taliesin*.

Line 3, *Prometheus Bound*. Line 4, the *Graal*, inverted yet not inverted, since the tears of the candidate, the blood of subincision, are later to transmute themselves into the golden wine of *Dionysos*, the crystal waters of *Kane*, etc., etc., for the refreshment of the tested and exhausted but triumphant psyche. . . . "Drink this", said the stranger. . . . "How do you feel now?" "I feel as if I could hunt always and never grow weary" (*Woggheeguy*, Australian Fairy Tales, Catherine Stow).

Lines 5 and 6 need no comment. 7 and 8, the removed "insides" of the seer, also the Spear of Parceval, and the pierced side of Jesus. 9 and 10 stress the thoroughness of the testing of the candidate and, in a queer way, imply the saturation of the psyche of the candidate—the laving with *tongues of fire*, the flickering tongue of the Rainbow Serpent, slaving over the candidate, about to be swallowed and regurgitated a New Man, as the Egyptian candidate passed through the entrails of the Sphinx, and as Maui sought (but in vain) to pass through his ogre-ancestress—this same Amazon-mate-mother and potential Virgin-spouse. 11 and 12 most subtly give the gradual rooting out of the Old Adam and the simultaneous development of the New, the Magical Child, at whose birth, in the consciousness, all Nature will slough its lamia-skin and burst into bridal bloom. The "bleeding youth" of 13 is the but freshly circumcised candidate, still raw from severance from his Old Adam, but, therethrough, of greatly enhanced sensibility to psychic realities. The "virgin bright" is once more the candidate's revised concept of Environmental Pressure transmuted into Spiritual Illumination; call it with Freud a delusion of Light, if you will, it is certainly a sensation which all mystics, primitive or advanced, feel a strange compulsion to invite and sometimes to record in allegory, no direct description being possible.

In fact, curious analysis of these lines merely affords fresh evidence that Blake is of the Timeless, of no period whatever, of less span and import than that of the whole continuum of the terrestrial trial of the Divine and eternally recrucified Adam. Had Blake been an Australian, Jindyworobak, with even less presumption than Surrealism, might claim him as predeceased type-hero and perduring cultural precedent.

WRITER AND READER

MEANJIN MADE NEW

Meanjin Papers. Autumn and Winter, 1943. Edited by C. B. Christesen. (Brisbane. 3s. each.)

DURING 1943 it was decided to enlarge *Meanjin Papers* and to publish the magazine as a quarterly instead of a bi-monthly. This development was accompanied by an extension of aims. "‘Meanjin’", the editor explains, "is now making an attempt to interpret and record the varied phenomena underlying the imaginative life of this country; to present a documentation of experience during these fateful years; to seek out the Australian tradition; to record the story, in prose and verse, of how our people faced up to this unprecedented crisis." This is an ambitious programme and it is too soon to judge how far it can be fulfilled. But the autumn and winter issues for 1943 do reveal that *Meanjin* writers are more than ever concerned with contemporary problems and events, particularly as they affect Australia.

Much of the verse, for instance, reflects the intellectual and social upheaval of our time. Several poems are inspired, either directly or indirectly, by the war. The best of them, and perhaps the best poem in these issues, is Karl Shapiro's "Troop Train", a piece of effective description in which the laconic realism, the command of language, and the powerful originality of the images reveal an unusual talent. In H. Vintner's "Moment in History", the approach is more general. Some of the early lines do not lack eloquence, but on the whole this is meditation in verse rather than poetry. "Omnibus Usu", by Vance Palmer, expresses faith in human destiny with firmer conviction and more concentrated poetic power. Other contributions worthy of comment include the two "Songs" by Theodore Spencer which combine a certain austerity of diction with a lyric quality that justifies their titles. Then there are the poems which, while they have little to do with the war, are conspicuously modern in sentiment and treatment. Prominent among these is A. D. Hope's "Australia". Mr. Hope speaks with quiet insistence, without, as it were, raising his voice. His versification is finished and some of his comparisons are unusual and arresting:

A nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey
In the field uniform of modern wars,
Darkens her hills, those endless outstretched paws
Of Sphinx demolished or stone lion worn away.

Nearly as competent in technique are James McAuley's "On a Dream" and Muir Holburn's "Ars Poetica". If there is one charge, however, which can be made against both these poems, it is that they are too deficient in spontaneity, too completely sophisticated. This cannot be said of Harry Hooton's diverting contribution, with its theme "The proper study of mankind is machinery". Crude and grotesque as well as ingenious and vigorous, Mr. Hooton will offend

many readers. But this does not trouble him, for he has (or affects) a truly Whitmanesque arrogance:

I am conceited—my place is with God.

Mention must also be made of R. G. Howarth's "Revelation" and "Lyric", both of which are in the metaphysical manner.

The prose in these issues, to an even greater extent than the verse, deals with the problems of contemporary society, especially in Australia. In "Signs of the Times" Henrietta Drake-Brockman draws attention to the need of educating the young for a better future, the dangers of intolerance, and the necessity (as she considers it) for developing a distinctively Australian literature. Two other writers take a somewhat different view, for they complain that we are already too parochial. J. V. Duhig recalls the glory of the pagan tradition and condemns the general hostility or indifference in this country towards foreign literature. A. R. Chisholm's article is at once a plea for a more liberal outlook on the part of Australians and the denunciation of "all those who have not the courage to be themselves", no matter to what group they belong. Several contributions are concerned with the place of the poet in the modern world. H. Vintner and Joseph O'Dwyer both stress the relations of the poet with the community in which he writes. "In this age", states Mr. Vintner, "the poet cannot remain in isolation and have any real significance." This, surely is to overrate the connection between poetry and the environment in which it is produced. It may be greater and more interesting if it accepts the challenge of contemporary conditions, but much poetry has been produced in the present century which does not do this and yet is by no means without significance. Poetry is not just a sociological phenomenon.

The number of short stories is small but paucity in this branch of writing seems to be inevitable in any magazine of genuine literary standards. Brian Elliott's "Fragments from an Unfinished Novel" (if, indeed, this can be classed as a short story) suffers from considerable obscurity and the lack of unity which the title suggests. "Last of the Tribe", by "E. Dithmack", is a straightforward piece of narrative which is generally convincing. Technically, the most proficient contribution is Margaret Trist's "Kiss Your Father Good-bye", which achieves its limited effects with brevity and precision. But there is peril in its methods: its devices are very obvious and, employed too often, might well become mere mannerisms.

Something must also be said of the literary criticism. In "Australian Poetry To-Day and its Prospects for To-Morrow", H. M. Green comments on the relative achievements of English and Australian poets in this century and gives a brief but informative survey of the work of our younger poets. Of the two "Letters to Tom Collins", one, by Nettie Palmer, deplores the pedantry and prudery which she detects in this author's style; the other, which is partly a reply, advances the

surprising argument that long words betoken profound thought. One would like to see a larger and more thorough review section. However, there is some work of real value. The criticism of "Angry Penguins", by H. J. Oliver, is penetrating and instructive. So also is P. F. Rowland's notice of G. Carson-Cooling's "Education in Post-War Reconstruction", although it is hard to agree that the teaching of Latin is the best means of teaching English grammar. Donovan Clarke's review of Vance Palmer's monograph on Frank Wilmot is less satisfying. When he asserts that Wilmot failed as a poet because he brought no message during years of depression and confusion, Mr. Clarke is forsaking the impartial ground of the critic for a personal point of view. Like other Meanjin writers, he seems to think that poetry and sociology are indivisible.

Indeed, one wonders if in all this stress upon the relations of the artist and society there is not a danger for the magazine as a whole. At times its literary functions seem likely to be submerged in a flood of speculation and debate on general questions. One longs to have less talk and more literature. Nevertheless, it is true that in a period such as the present the fundamental ideas on which literature is based require examination and revision. Discussion of the kind for which *Meanjin Papers* so liberally provide an opportunity might well prepare the way for important creative achievements.

C. J. H. O'BRIEN.

PRELUDE TO FLIGHT

Birds of a Feather. By Gavin Casey (Albert's Bookshop, Perth, W.A. 2s. 6d.)

Birds of a Feather is an unpretentious, paper-covered volume, not even as well printed as it might be; yet it contains much to interest those who have at heart the renaissance of the Australian short-story. The main criticism of the volume must be that it is so uneven: *Cheese for Crib*, for instance, is a weak attempt at a humorously dramatic story in something like the Lawson vein; *Pioneers* shows that Mr. Casey sometimes says too much; one becomes aware of an overfondness for the same kind of anti-climax; and there are many rough edges in the writing. (After a series of elegant variations like "Tom said . . . Dick pointed out . . . Tom chuckled . . . said Dick, disgusted . . . said Tom amiably . . . Dick growled . . . Dick said . . . Tom assured him" one longs for the manner of the early Hemingway.)

But Mr. Casey can achieve the concentration necessary in the short-story; he has a good sense of humour; sometimes he hits off a character excellently (*The Fat Man*); and he has a first-hand knowledge of the goldfields and the other interesting parts of Australia he writes about. Moreover—and I should say this of few of our writers in prose—he constantly gives the impression that he is quite capable of going on to better things.

H. J. OLIVER.

ADDRESSES TO THE ASSOCIATION

March–August, 1943

“*The Poetry of Hugh McCrae*”

March 31: Mr. H. M. Green, B.A., LL.B.

HUGH McCRAE is one of our two principal lyric poets. The other is, of course, Shaw Neilson, but the two have nothing but lyricism in common. If Neilson may be compared with a violet growing beside a stone, McCrae is like a sunflower in the sun. Neilson's best work possessed an ethereal delicacy; McCrae's is remarkable for an intense vitality and vigour.

McCrae is above all things an artist. No Australian poet, and hardly any poet outside Australia, is so fine a craftsman, has so sensitive and developed a taste, has taken such pains so consistently, or has such power of self-criticism. Only two influences are evident in his work, that of the border ballad and that of Norman Lindsay, although Lindsay's drawings sometimes rather overweight the poems they illustrate.

The predominant characteristics of McCrae's work are its richness and vividness. He has an artist's sense of colour and contrast, and in his poetry a series of scenes is flashed on the reader's mind so strongly as almost to startle, yet the scenes are not static; they have movement, and they move to music.

For McCrae the world and life are simplified and speeded up. There is this defect in his poetry, that it possesses no intellectual quality. For him the eternal, the infinite are “beyond the confines of philosophy”. A prince of lyrists, he cannot be compared with the slower and heavier Brennan.

April–May Meetings

On 28th April the annual general meeting was held. The meeting concluded with a short address on “Irony in Literature” by Mr. Wallace Lennard, M.A. He cited examples of misunderstandings of works, such as *Gulliver's Travels*; of quotations from Shakespeare wrested from their context and misapplied; of wrong prophecies, such as Dr. Farmer's belief that *Tristram Shandy* would be antique in twenty years and Scott's that Home's *Douglas* would be immortal. Curious, too, was the fate of Charles Reade, Blackmore, and Kinglake, who each wrote one book so well that few persons have read any of their other works. Many other strange facts to be found in literary history were mentioned.

At the meeting on 26th May Mr. Frank Clewlow gave an informal address on “Poets I Have Met”. After speaking of his association with John Drinkwater at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, he gave interesting reminiscences of Drinkwater and the other Georgian poets, Wilfrid Gibson, Rupert Brooke, and Lascelles Abercrombie, who

collaborated in producing the journal *New Numbers*. Other poets of whom he spoke were W. H. Davies, John Masefield, and Robert Bain, a Scotsman who wrote a verse tragedy called "King James I of Scotland", which was produced by Mr. Clewlow.

"Books in Australia Today"

June 23: Miss Beatrice Davis, B.A.

Restriction of paper and manpower has made book publishing a very difficult business. British publishers have suffered seriously through paper rationing and bombing, and we in Australia can get only 20% of our normal requirements from them. Moreover, all general literature from America is barred, and only technical and scientific books are allowed shipping space. This should be a golden opportunity for the Australian publisher; but, except for the absence of bombing, we are in the same straits as the English publishers.

The need for books now is greater than it has ever been. The war seems to have created an enormous increase in the demand for books: Allied troops are eager buyers, camp libraries must be supplied, and people who formerly went out at night for amusement now appear to stay at home to read. Yet so limited are the stocks in the book-shops that almost anything will sell—even poetry.

Since the war began, except in the field of poetry, the quality and quantity of creative literary work have been meagre. There have been much good factual writing, some worth-while biographies and political and economic studies; but these are scarcely literature. Perhaps the only novels worthy of note are those by Leonard Mann, Eve Langley, Eleanor Dark, Ernestine Hill and Kylie Tennant; and although the work of these novelists has the creative quality, it can hardly be called great. In the field of the short story first-rate work has been done by Dalby Davison, Margaret Trist and Gavin Casey. Much excellent verse has been written, and the only literary reflection of the war has come from the poets. Yet no poetic work on a big scale has been attempted, with the exception perhaps of Douglas Stewart's three verse dramas, which are outstanding.

STUDENT PAPERS

25th August

"Robinson Jeffers"

Miss Gwen Smith

In his narrative poetry Robinson Jeffers shows civilization to be rotten at the core. It is introspection that is to blame, and the only escape for man is to get away from society, to place himself outside civilization. In spite of their suffering, most of his main characters reach peace and salvation beyond social life; in his own words, they win "a tower beyond tragedy".

After a too continuous reading, Jeffers's work palls. The characters are incredible. Yet in many ways this criticism is irrelevant, since what he has created is a series of modern myths. For almost all his poems there is either a classical (generally Greek) or a biblical parallel. His work is not meant to be real-life drama; he is portraying the primitive passions of man greatly magnified. But he has reduced man to too simple a formula of lust, hate and strength, and has failed to grasp the importance of social institutions.

Even if we find Jeffers unpalatable in every other way, he must still rank as one of the great regional poets of modern America. He may be more concerned with reading meanings into Nature than most regional poets, but in his descriptions there are beauty and a love of some of the harsher aspects of nature for their own sake. His lyric work is relatively flat, but despite its faults his narrative poetry has greater imaginative force than that of any other modern poet.

"Archibald MacLeish"

Mr. R. K. Levis

MacLeish has developed from "private" poetry, deeply introspective and personal, to "poetry of the world". His early work, "The Happy Marriage", "The Pot of Earth", "Streets in the Moon", and "The Hamlet of A. MacLeish", is subjective in content. In the last of these poems he grapples with the problem of his relationship with the world in its confused state, reaching the conclusion that we must accept life as it actually is.

MacLeish then decided that "the recovery of the use of living tongues means that poetry can again reoccupy the living world from which it has been so long excluded. And the reoccupation of the living world by poetry means with equal necessity, its reoccupation by poets". He turned to the American life that he really knew, and a warm humanity appeared in his subsequent work. His attitude to the "common man" is seen in "Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City . . ." and "America Was Promises". The need for people to be aware of what is happening in the world about them, and a warning to those who "do not wish to accept the responsibility of understanding" underlie the plays "Panic", "Air Raid" and "The Fall of the City". MacLeish deliberately turned to the drama as a form capable of reaching a wider audience.

In his work he is a strict disciplinarian, a conscious artist with a sensitive ear. He has set out to capture the rhythms of common speech and has evolved a verse form capable of delicate modulation, seen to advantage in "Conquistador". He is of especial interest to Australian writers as a poet who has interpreted the life of his own country in the light of a western culture.

T.G.H.

NOTES

Donne: "Memorabilist's" *Criticisms of Mr. Milgate*.—"In this century, for the first time since his own day, John Donne has emerged as a landmark in our literary development.' Unless 'emerging as a landmark' has a very particular significance which has eluded me, this sentence would seem to assert that Donne had no importance for Coleridge, for the young Patmore, for Rossetti, for George MacDonald, for Saintsbury, for Gosse, for Alice Meynell—but he had. And even in the admirable passage we have printed ['He sought a method', etc.] Mr. Milgate is not struck by the aptness with which the first part describes Browning, nor by the reincarnation of Donne in Gerard Manley Hopkins . . . since he insists, three times, that it is only in our own time that Donne's influence has had full scope, it would seem that he is unaware of Browning and Hopkins, and of the nineteenth-century poetry-lovers we have mentioned. And when Mr. Milgate says that, in his prose, Donne 'merely indulged brilliantly and fitfully in the practices of his age', is he not saying that a passage of Donne's prose could not be distinguished from passages of Raleigh, Bacon, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Drummond? This is a genuine question. I propose to read the sermons to find the answer."—*Notes and Queries*, January 30, 1943, page 77.

Mr. Milgate's reply:

The object of the abstract from which "Memorabilist" quotes (*Southerly*, September, 1942) was to recall to those who heard it the essential points made in a long and rather exacting lecture, and those who were not present could not hope to interpret with much precision the deliberately vague generalizations of the abstract (Browning and Hopkins, for example, were mentioned in the lecture). Even so, I think a grasp of the drift of the abstract itself would have saved "Memorabilist" from a too personal interpretation of the passages he quotes. A "landmark" is, in an accurate use of the word, first, something obvious to *all*, and second, something which guides the course. Even if one adds the names of Lamb, De Quincey, Mrs. Browning, G. L. Craik and Francis Thompson to the list of Donne's admirers given by "Memorabilist", one has hardly proved that Donne's importance was obvious to everyone in the nineteenth century; for his work was ignored or misunderstood by people like Arnold, Walter Scott and Palgrave, and he was done scant justice in the anthologies and histories of literature. Further, I doubt whether anyone before 1900, however much attracted to some aspects of his many-sided genius, considered the importance of Donne for any of the reasons mentioned in the abstract to be nearly so great as even the most hostile critic must recognize it to be to-day. But to say that the nineteenth century did not *fully* recognize Donne's importance is not to say that nobody gave him any importance whatever.

The assumption that if a writer indulges "in the practices of his age", his work must therefore be indistinguishable from that of any contemporary writer, and (to press the logical conclusion of this interpretation) that no distinction can be made between the work of any writers practising in that age, is clearly untenable. Then, of course, it was impossible for scholars of the last century in general to assess the importance of Donne as an influence since many of the striking examples, including Hopkins, appeared only in this. Very few, if any, nineteenth century critics *fully* recognized the critical problems involved in Donne's work (Coleridge being a brilliant exception), or stated them adequately; and to place Donne in the main stream of English poetry (as opposed to regarding him as a freak, a "witty" eccentric, a "false turning", a misguided experimenter, and so forth) has been the work of twentieth-century criticism.

I was grateful for the proof furnished in a second article by "Memorabilist" (*Notes and Queries*, February 13, 1943) that Patmore was familiar with Donne's work; and I should be glad if he, or any other reader of *Southerly*, could furnish external evidence (apart, that is, from the similarity in style) that Hopkins knew Donne. Hopkins makes no mention of him anywhere, not even in his remarks on "Sprung" rhythm. It is strange that he should ignore the most outstanding and most successful practitioner of sprung rhythm before Hopkins himself.

September "Southerly": Corrections.—P. 20, "invention": read "inventor"; p. 27, "And in God's house", etc.: read as two separate lines; pp. 28-9: for "Miss" read "Mrs"; p. 38: "No other Dominion literature is fuller, more varied and securer in achievement than ours": read "No other Dominion literature is so full, so varied and secure in achievement as ours".

Brennan Memorial Fund.—In consequence of a wish expressed by the late Mrs. Chris. Brennan to Mr. Howarth, a Brennan Memorial Fund has been opened by the Fellowship of Australian Writers. It is intended to erect a suitable memorial over Brennan's grave in the Northern Suburbs Cemetery. Subscriptions will be received by the Hon. Treasurer, the Fellowship of Australian Writers, Box 3448 R, G.P.O., Sydney.

"Julius Caesar".—Copies of Mr. S. Musgrove's lecture on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* are obtainable from Miss Herring, at the University, or from the Hon. Secretary. The price is 1s. 6d. a copy (postage 1½d.).

Donations to "Southerly".—Further donations include:

A.M.D. £2 2 0